

MARTIAL EAGLE *POLEMAETUS BELLICOSUS* ATTACKING
HARTEBEEST CALF *ALCELAPHUS BUSELAPHUS*

On 7 August 1983, in the Tarangire National Park (c. 4S, 36E), I observed a young antelope hiding behind a tree beside the track. Being uncertain of the species, I approached slowly. At about 50 m, it left the tree, cantered away from me down the road and was immediately identifiable from its gait as a very young hartebeest calf. At the moment the calf began to run I saw a Martial Eagle perched in a nearby tree. The eagle appeared to be immature because its underparts were very pale with few dark spots. It took off and started pursuing the hartebeest round the corner of the track and out of sight. A few seconds later the calf reappeared galloping straight towards me with the eagle some distance behind. As the calf came near me, it swerved off the road towards the river and started making a screaming bleating noise. The eagle also swerved off the line of the road, tilting in and out of the trees following the calf. I then saw the parent hartebeest approaching from the other side of the river about 100 m away, presumably in response to the bleating. Just as the calf reached the river bank, the eagle caught up with it and dived at it. I did not see exactly what happened at that moment, but obviously the eagle missed as, a second later, the calf reappeared on the other side of the river and joined its parent, apparently unharmed, and the eagle flew off. On the one hand I was relieved for the calf's sake, while on the other hand it would have been interesting to see how the eagle would have dealt with the calf, which I estimated at about 15 kg. This weight would have made it more than twice the weight of the eagle itself (given by Brown et al. (1982) as 3010 to 6200 g). Small antelope up to the size of an impala *Aepyceros melampus* calf or of a weight up to 5 kg have been recorded in the Martial Eagle's diet (Brown et al., *op. cit.*) but no mention is made of an antelope as large as a young hartebeest.

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A PINTAIL SNIPE *GALLINAGO STENURA* AT NAIVASHA

At midday on 23 January 1982 I flushed about 40 African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis* and 20 Common Snipe *G. gallinago* from flooded grassland bordering the tall sedge on the western shore of Lake Naivasha, Kenya. With them was a snipe with a strange weak call and a slower flight which lacked white on the trailing edge of the wing. I flushed this bird three more times during the afternoon from the same spot, and observed it in good sunlight, placing myself on one occasion so that it flew past giving a good side view at about 10 m.

The bird always consorted with Common Snipe, and good comparisons with this species were possible. It was similar in size and certainly no larger than Common Snipe, but its flight was slower, more or less direct, and it pitched on each occasion no more than 50 to 150 m away out in the sedge. It invariably called when flushed, an abrupt grating note which I recorded as *krrek* or *quek*, weaker and less explosive than the call of Common Snipe, but to my ears similar in pitch. The feet trailed noticeably beyond the tail in flight, the wings seemed rather narrow and the bill was not particularly long for a snipe. The whole appearance was duller than that of a Common Snipe. The upperwing looked pale and uniform, dull buffish on the forewing, greyer towards the rear, and with no visible white trailing edge to the secondaries. The upperparts appeared to lack the rich tones of a Common Snipe, and body